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Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

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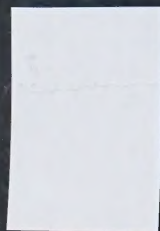
CIDA

Government
Publications

Country Profile

Malawi

Canada





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④ Malawi

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PEOPLE

The population of Malawi is approximately 5.9 million. The Africans are Bantu in origin and there are also about 11,000 of Asian origin and 7,000 of European origin in this densely populated country.

Christian missionaries -- mainly Scottish Presbyterians -- played an important part in the development of the country from the middle of the 19th century, and today almost half the population are Christians. English and Chewa are the official languages.

GEOGRAPHY

Malawi is a narrow, landlocked strip of lakes and mountains bounded by Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. About one-third of its 118,000 square kilometre area consists of water. The largest body is Lake Malawi, formerly called Lake Nyasa. In the southern half of the country, the wet season is from mid-November to April and the dry season is from May to November. In the northern half of the country the seasons are about a month later. Temperatures range between 32 and 43 degrees Celsius in the hot season and as low as 15 degrees Celsius in June and July.

HISTORY

The first written records of Malawi are found in Portuguese journals of the 17th and 18th centuries when Portuguese travelers journeyed across the southern end of the country. The earliest settlement by Bantu-speaking peoples in Malawi appears to have been about the first century AD.

Western contact with Malawi came in 1859 through the Scottish explorer David Livingstone. Legend states that when he asked the name of the large lake, he was told "Nyasa" so he called the country Nyasaland. "Nyasa" really means "lake" and the original name of the country was Malawi, the name to which it reverted upon attaining independence from Britain in 1964.

Livingstone found Malawi in a state of devastation with warring tribes and slave-trading. In 1875 both the Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland established missions to preach Christianity and fight the slave trade. The African Lakes Corporation, a British trading company, worked in close cooperation with the missionaries to fight slavery and establish commerce. In 1876 the Established Church of Scotland founded a mission called Blantyre after Livingstone's birthplace in Scotland and it is now the largest city in Malawi.

Other Europeans, missionaries, traders, hunters and coffee planters followed and in 1883 a British consulate was established at Blantyre. In 1891 an Anglo-Portuguese convention declared the "Nyasaland Districts" a British Protectorate. In 1907 the first British governor and the first legislative council were appointed. This system lasted for almost 50 years. In 1953 Nyasaland joined Northern and Southern Rhodesia to form the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In 1960 a new constitution was drawn up in London which for the first time provided for the election of Africans to the legislative council.

The Malawi Congress Party, under the leadership of Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, won an overwhelming victory and in 1962 Dr. Banda became prime minister. Britain granted Malawi independence on July 6, 1964 and in 1966 Malawi became a member of the Commonwealth with Dr. Banda as president. Later in 1971 he became life president. Since independence Malawi has had a stable government, staying away from the forefront of African politics and concentrating on economic self-reliance.

ECONOMY

Malawi is one of the world's least developed countries (LLDCs) with a per capita annual income of less than U.S. \$200 and the country is heavily dependent on external assistance for its development program. Its economy is largely dependent on agricultural production. Economic development has been handicapped by inadequate transportation facilities and a shortage of management and technical skills.

Since independence, however, the government of Malawi has tried to create an efficient manufacturing sector through the Malawi Development Corporation. Recent local industries include building materials, agricultural tools, textiles, sugar, matches, beer, gin, soft drinks, fertilizer mixing, and agricultural products processing and packaging for local consumption and export. This has helped reduce Malawi's reliance on imports and has helped maintain a growth of exports.

In agriculture, efforts to improve techniques in order to increase the output of staple foods and to expand the production and quality of cash crops have begun to pay off. Maize is the main food crop and is grown by most smallholders. Tobacco and tea are the most important cash crops and export earners.

Development projects introduced under a 20-year plan by the government of Malawi also include improving roads, markets, health and education facilities and water supply in rural areas. This development plan is reassessed and revised every five years. Malawi is starting to reap the benefits of this long-range planning and strong spirit of self-help.

CANADIAN ASSISTANCE

The emphasis of the Canadian assistance program since 1973 has been on improving Malawi's railway system in order that this landlocked country can be connected with neighboring countries to enable it to transport its export crops which include tobacco, tea, sugar, maize and rice.

Canada has contributed \$89 million to the railway project since construction started in 1973. The project consists of the construction of 240 kilometres of new rail lines and the rehabilitation of 80 kilometres of existing tracks. Also included in the construction program are a concrete plant, line stations, staff housing and a main station and a marshaling yard in Lilongwe. The Canadian contribution includes the provision of rails, locomotives, rolling stock and construction equipment amounting to \$46 million, and technical assistance amounting to about \$7 million. This railway project is the largest single project undertaken directly by CIDA.

Before this large bilateral project began in the early 1970s, Canada provided Malawi with a small amount of development assistance through the Commonwealth Aid Program which provided such things as scholarships for Malawians.

Canadian missionaries, including the White Fathers, nuns and lay missionaries have been teaching in Malawi since 1930 and more than 100 continue to work there, mainly in schools and hospitals.

Since 1968 CIDA's Special Programs Branch has funded projects initiated by Canadian non-governmental organizations. For example, CUSO received \$30,000 to fund a fisheries project, the Anglican Church received \$28,500 towards its pediatrics clinic at Malinio Hospital and the Canadian Council of Churches received \$25,000 to support its social development program.

To date, Canada has provided a total of approximately \$110 million in development assistance to Malawi.

BILATERAL ASSISTANCE

The goal of CIDA's bilateral program in Malawi is to assist it to overcome the constraints imposed by its landlocked position. Canada's assistance is concentrated in two sectors: transportation and agriculture/rural development.

There are seven bilateral projects with a total value of \$34.7 million now underway.

Current projects include:

Railway development - \$89 million (since 1971)

For the design and construction of 240 kilometres of railway line and the rehabilitation of 80 kilometres of existing track employing 1,500 full-time workers. Canada has provided personnel, materials, equipment and training for Malawi railway personnel.

Dairy development project - \$6.9 million

For provision of technical assistance, capital construction and technical assistance training, and heifers to assist smallholder livestock and dairy development to alleviate the shortage of liquid milk in Malawi.

Rural health clinics - \$1.7 million

For construction and technical assistance to rehabilitate antiquated rural health clinics and to establish a refresher course for the medical assistants who staff them.

Rural piped water - \$1.2 million

To provide a safe and reliable source of potable water to villagers in selected regions of Malawi.

National rural development - \$3 million

To increase surpluses of food and cash crops and raise rural incomes and living standards. This project is co-financed with the World Bank.

Natural resources college - \$19.5 million

To provide an integrated and expanded school for the training of agricultural, fisheries and veterinary extension workers.

Mission Administered Funds (MAF)

This \$150,000 annual fund is used to support projects, usually initiated by community groups and voluntary organizations, that provide economic, technical or social development assistance. To date, projects have included small schools, houses for teachers and medical assistants, small bridges with the labor supplied by local Malawians and assistance to a garment-producing enterprise employing the handicapped. The MAF grants have averaged about \$5,000 each and have paid for project supplies which the villagers themselves could not supply or pay for.

MULTILATERAL AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

Among the United Nations and other multilateral agencies active in Malawi to which CIDA contributes funds are the African Development Fund, the World Bank and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

ASSISTANCE FROM CIDA'S SPECIAL PROGRAMS BRANCH

The assistance channels of the Special Programs Branch involve direct participation of Canadians in efforts to promote self-reliance and meet basic human needs in developing countries. Malawi is currently receiving development assistance through the following programs of CIDA's Special Programs Branch:

Non-Governmental Organizations Division (NGO)

CIDA is currently funding 11 projects initiated by Canadian non-governmental organizations for a total CIDA contribution of \$220,815. The projects include a hospital maternity unit run by the Presbyterian Church of Canada and an Anti-Leprosy Program run by Institut Fame Pereo.

Institutional Cooperation and Development Services Division (ICDS)

CIDA is currently funding six projects under this program for a total CIDA contribution of \$37,495. The projects include support to the Canadian Home Economics Association for their Malawi-Nova Scotia home economics project, to the World University Service of Canada to provide equipment for their nursery school project, to Trent University for their teacher upgrading program and to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for their university planning office project.

Industrial Cooperation Division (ICD)

To date, this CIDA program has sponsored a cement plant feasibility study in Malawi.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Official name	Republic of Malawi
Capital	Lilongwe
Area	118,000 sq. km.
Population (1980)	5,968,000
Population density	50.6 people per sq. km.
Population growth rate (1970-79)	2.8%
Official languages	Chewa, English
Significant dates	
May 15, 1891	Nyasaland Districts (Malawi) are declared a British protectorate.
July 6, 1964	Nyasaland is granted independence and takes the name Malawi.
July 6, 1966	Malawi joins the British Commonwealth.
Life expectancy at birth (1979)	47 years
Infant mortality rate (age 0-1)	142 per 1,000 live births
Daily per capita calorie supply as percentage of requirement (1977)	90%
Percentage of population with access to safe water (1975)	33%
Adult literacy rate	25%
Currency	Malawi kwacha
GNP per capita (1979)	U.S. \$200
Inflation rate (1979)	11.1%
Percentage of labor force in:	
agriculture	86%
industry	5%
services	9%
Main exports	Tobacco, tea, sugar

Exports to Canada (1980)

Tea	\$ 388,000
Sporting and recreation equipment	\$ 58,000
Other	\$ 30,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$ 476,000</u>

Imports from Canada (1980)

Railway and street railway rolling stock	\$20,650,000
Metal fabricated basic products	\$ 72,000
Non-metallic mineral basic products	\$ 53,000
Other	\$ 258,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$21,033,000</u>

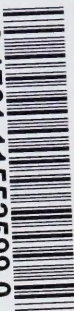
Sources: World Development Report 1981, published by the World Bank.
Atlasco faits et chiffres 1981/82, published by Le Nouvel
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1981 World Population Data Sheet, published by the Population
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